



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 1087

January Session, 2021



**AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF
HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN THE STATE.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 19a-7d of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

3 (a) [The] Not later than January 1, 2022, the Commissioner of Public
4 Health [may] shall establish, within available appropriations, a program
5 to provide three-year grants to community-based providers of primary
6 care services in order to expand access to health care for the uninsured.
7 The grants may be awarded to community-based providers of primary
8 care for (1) funding for direct services, (2) recruitment and retention of
9 primary care clinicians [and registered nurses] through subsidizing of
10 salaries or through a loan repayment program, and (3) capital
11 expenditures. The community-based providers of primary care under
12 the direct service program shall provide, or arrange access to, primary
13 and preventive services, referrals to specialty services, including
14 rehabilitative and mental health services, inpatient care, prescription
15 drugs, basic diagnostic laboratory services, health education and
16 outreach to alert people to the availability of services. Primary care
17 clinicians [and registered nurses] participating in the state loan
18 repayment program or receiving subsidies shall provide services to the

19 uninsured based on a sliding fee schedule, provide free care if necessary,
20 accept Medicare assignment and participate as Medicaid providers, or
21 provide nursing services in school-based health centers and expanded
22 school health sites, as such terms are defined in section 19a-6r. The
23 commissioner may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions
24 of chapter 54, to establish eligibility criteria, services to be provided by
25 participants, the sliding fee schedule, reporting requirements and the
26 loan repayment program. For the purposes of this section, "primary care
27 clinicians" includes family practice physicians, general practice
28 osteopaths, obstetricians and gynecologists, internal medicine
29 physicians, pediatricians, dentists, certified nurse midwives, advanced
30 practice registered nurses, registered nurses, alcohol and drug
31 counselors, pharmacists, mental health care providers, physician
32 assistants and dental hygienists.

33 (b) Funds appropriated for the state loan repayment program shall
34 not lapse until fifteen months following the end of the fiscal year for
35 which such funds were appropriated.

36 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section, "federally-
37 qualified health center" has the same meaning as provided in Section
38 1905(l)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396d(l)(2)(B), as
39 amended from time to time.

40 (b) Not later than January 1, 2022, the Department of Public Health
41 shall establish a five-year pilot program for the recruitment and
42 retention by federally-qualified health centers in the state of mental
43 health care providers, including, but not limited to, psychiatrists
44 licensed pursuant to chapter 370 of the general statutes, psychologists
45 licensed pursuant to chapter 383 of the general statutes and advanced
46 practice registered nurses licensed pursuant to chapter 378 of the
47 general statutes who are board certified as psychiatric mental health
48 providers by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. The
49 Commissioner of Public Health shall (1) prescribe the form and manner
50 in which a federally-qualified health center may apply to the
51 department to participate in the pilot program, (2) establish the criteria

52 to be used by the department in selecting federally-qualified health
53 centers to participate in the pilot program, which shall include, but need
54 not be limited to, prioritizing the placement of mental health care
55 providers in areas of the state where (A) there is the greatest need for
56 such providers, (B) there are economically distressed municipalities,
57 and (C) residents do not have access to mental health care within close
58 proximity to their homes, and (3) explore the means of funding the pilot
59 program through public-private partnerships, grant programs, federal
60 funds and state funds.

61 (c) Not later than January 1, 2023, and annually thereafter until
62 January 1, 2027, the Commissioner of Public Health shall submit a
63 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
64 statutes, containing an evaluation of the operation and effectiveness of
65 the pilot program to the joint standing committee of the General
66 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public health.

67 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June
68 30, 2021, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Office of Higher Education
69 shall, within available appropriations, administer a mental health care
70 provider loan reimbursement grant program for persons who meet the
71 eligibility requirements described in subsection (b) of this section.

72 (b) The program shall provide student loan reimbursement grants to
73 any person who (1) is a psychiatrist licensed pursuant to chapter 370 of
74 the general statutes, a psychologist licensed pursuant to chapter 383 of
75 the general statutes or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed
76 pursuant to chapter 378 of the general statutes who is board certified as
77 a psychiatric mental health provider by the American Nurses
78 Credentialing Center, and (2) is employed as a mental health care
79 provider by a federally-qualified health center in the state for not less
80 than two years.

81 (c) Any person who satisfies the eligibility requirements prescribed
82 in subsection (b) of this section may receive an annual grant for
83 reimbursement of federal or state educational loans (1) in an amount not

84 to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars in any year, and (2) for a period
85 not to exceed two years. Such person shall only be reimbursed for loan
86 payments made while such person is employed by a federally-qualified
87 health center.

88 (d) Persons may apply to the Office of Higher Education for grants
89 under this section at such time and in such manner as the executive
90 director of the Office of Higher Education prescribes.

91 (e) Any unexpended funds appropriated for purposes of this section
92 shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year but shall be available for
93 expenditure during the next fiscal year.

94 (f) The Office of Higher Education may accept gifts, grants and
95 donations, from any source, public or private, for the mental health care
96 provider loan reimbursement grant program.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	19a-7d
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

Section 1(a), the first two references to "and registered nurses" were bracketed for consistency with the defined term in said section.

PH *Joint Favorable Subst.*